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SUBJECT: JUNE 8-11 VISIT TO SPAIN OF COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA
COMMAND

REF: MADRID 678

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION HUGO LLORENS, REASONS 1.4(B) AND
(D).

11. (C) Summary: General William E. "Kip" Ward, Commander U.S. Africa Command, visited Spain June 8-11 for meetings with Spanish officials reg General of the Presidency Bernardino Leon, MFA Secretary of State for Foreign Policy Angel Lossada, and MOD Secretary General for Defense Polic solicited Spanish views and heard that, while Spain's historical interest in North Africa has not diminished, its interest sub-Saharan Africa i cooperatively with the new command. End summary.

What AFRICOM Is and Is Not

12. (C) In all of his meetings, General Ward stressed that AFRICOM was not about the militarization of Africa. Security assistance activities w greater focus to existing security assistance programs and enhance the ability of the U.S. military to support USG efforts across the board in

13. (C) General Ward stressed to all his Spanish interlocutors that AFRICOM wanted to avoid conflicting with other international actors and dor

14. (C) General Ward said the terrorism threat in Africa was very real. Al Qaida made no secret of its aims against the west. He noted AFRICOM multi-disciplinary construct that would facilitate coordination with other USG agencies as well as international partners working in Africa. Ge

15. (C) The Spanish were interested in the basing issue, but General Ward made clear that his priority is standing up his headquarters and his
Chief of Defense

16. (C) Spanish Chief of Defense General Felix Sanz was quick to tell Ambassador Aguirre and General Ward that he needed no convincing: he was

17. (C) Sanz said he was trying to educate the political levels of the government and welcomed any information AFRICOM could provide to assist AFRICOM, subject of course to the policy direction of the political leadership. Sanz noted Spain's long historical association with North Afric illegal immigration to the Canary Islands. Sanz said no other area of the world affected Spanish interests more than Africa.

18. (C) Sanz urged General Ward to be stubborn in building an understanding of and support for AFRICOM's mission. He noted there were political
Secretary General of the Presidency

19. (C) Secretary General of the Presidency Bernardino Leon spent nearly 90 minutes with General Ward and talked extensively about Spanish view

110. (C) On Western Sahara, Leon said Algeria had rebuffed a Moroccan proposal to open the border. The excuse was concern over Western Sahara but Leon doubted this. He suspected Algeria remained unhappy over what they regarded as Morocco's unhelpful attitude during

111. (C) Leon noted sub-Saharan Africa was becoming a very important of Spain's national security concerns and presented multiple complex chall Leon stated Spain was working on an updated (2008-2012) version of its Plan Africa for the sub-Sahara. He also said the Foreign Ministry was el euros).

112. (C) Leon predicted President Zapatero would travel often to sub-Saharan Africa in his second term. He also noted Spain planned to organize and Zaire. He mentioned Spain's deployment of troops to the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the current deployment of tw

113. (C) Leon mentioned he had recently visited Chad. He said it was important to work with the AU, but he was pessimistic. He did not expect a

114. (C) Leon predicted Mali and Niger could do well with the support of the international community. He noted Spain was trying to help and the customs and immigration authorities). He said some of the islands had airstrips which were being used by South American drug traffickers. Spain

115. (C) Turning to Senegal, Mauritania, and the Gambia, Leon said Spain was working to improve their capacity. He said law enforcement cooper

116. (C) With regard to Liberia and Sierra Leon, Leon noted Liberia used to produce rice for the entire region and the destruction of other crc West Africa aimed at the rural population. He said the study would cost \$10 to \$11 million. He also mentioned some sub regional infrastructure

117. (C) Leon said Spain had developed good relations with Angola and Mozambique in the wake of Portugal's withdrawal. He noted Spain's interes
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

118. (C) Angel Lossada, the new number two in the Foreign Ministry, stressed that Africa was no longer a far away place to Spain. Thanks to glc recent years, mainly in the Sahel. Development assistance was now approaching the one billion euro mark. Plan Africa was being continued out tc

119. (C) Lossada stressed the porosity of borders in Africa and the threat from Al Qaida in the Maghreb. He noted the engagement by the Ministr only by improving the law enforcement response but by working with source countries on creating more opportunity at home, directing remittances Middle East.

120. (C) Keying off General Ward's remarks on the Africa Partnership Station, Lossada said he could see many avenues for cooperation in Africa.
Secretary General for Defense Policy

121. (C) Secretary General for Defense Policy Luis Cuesta commended the comprehensive approach of AFRICOM and said Spain likewise was trying tc AFRICOM meshed well with Spain's own interests in counter-terrorism and fighting drug trafficking and illegal immigration. As did all General W

122. (C) Cuesta noted the rise in illegal immigration to Spain from Africa and Spain's efforts to stem that, in part by increasing security enc development in the source countries, including job training both to encourage people to stay home and to ensure those coming to Spain via legal another six. Cuesta also noted Spain's involvement in EU and UN operations in Africa (e.g., Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc.).

123. (C) Cuesta said the Spanish view of AFRICOM would to a great extent be shaped by the views of the African countries with which Spain had c Defense Cooperation, although he noted it would be difficult for Spain to participate in or support direct action missions in Africa without sc

124. (C) Cuesta said transparency would be a key element for success in terms of securing Spanish support for AFRICOM's activities. General Ward noted the Africa Partnership Station experience with Spain had been positive. He also mentioned involving Spain in Fli

125. (C) Asked about what concerns he had heard expressed about AFRICOM, Cuesta said Spain had heard skepticism from the Sudanese and South Afr
Spain Eager to Send Liaison Officer

¶26. (C) Both General Sanz and Luis Cuesta expressed strong interest in sending a liaison officer to AFRICOM. Cuesta said he had mentioned this idea to the MOD (Note: As detailed in reftel, the MOD in turn in Africa, much work remained to be done. She asked that the USG coordinate closely with Spain on next steps. End note). General Ward explained

Somali Pirates

¶27. (C) Leon, Lossada, and Cuesta all stressed the problem of piracy off Somalia and cited the recent capture of a Spanish fishing vessel in P Washington where he had discussed the idea with the NATO SYG. Leon hoped that with UNSCR 1816 it would be possible to organize an international

Press

¶28. (U) General Ward was interviewed by a journalist from leading Spanish daily El Pais and had the opportunity to make many of the same point

Comment

¶29. (C) General Ward's visit to Spain was a resounding success from our point of view. He was able to meet with senior Spanish officials and r General Ward committed so much time and effort here and look forward to a return visit at his earliest opportunity. AGUIRRE